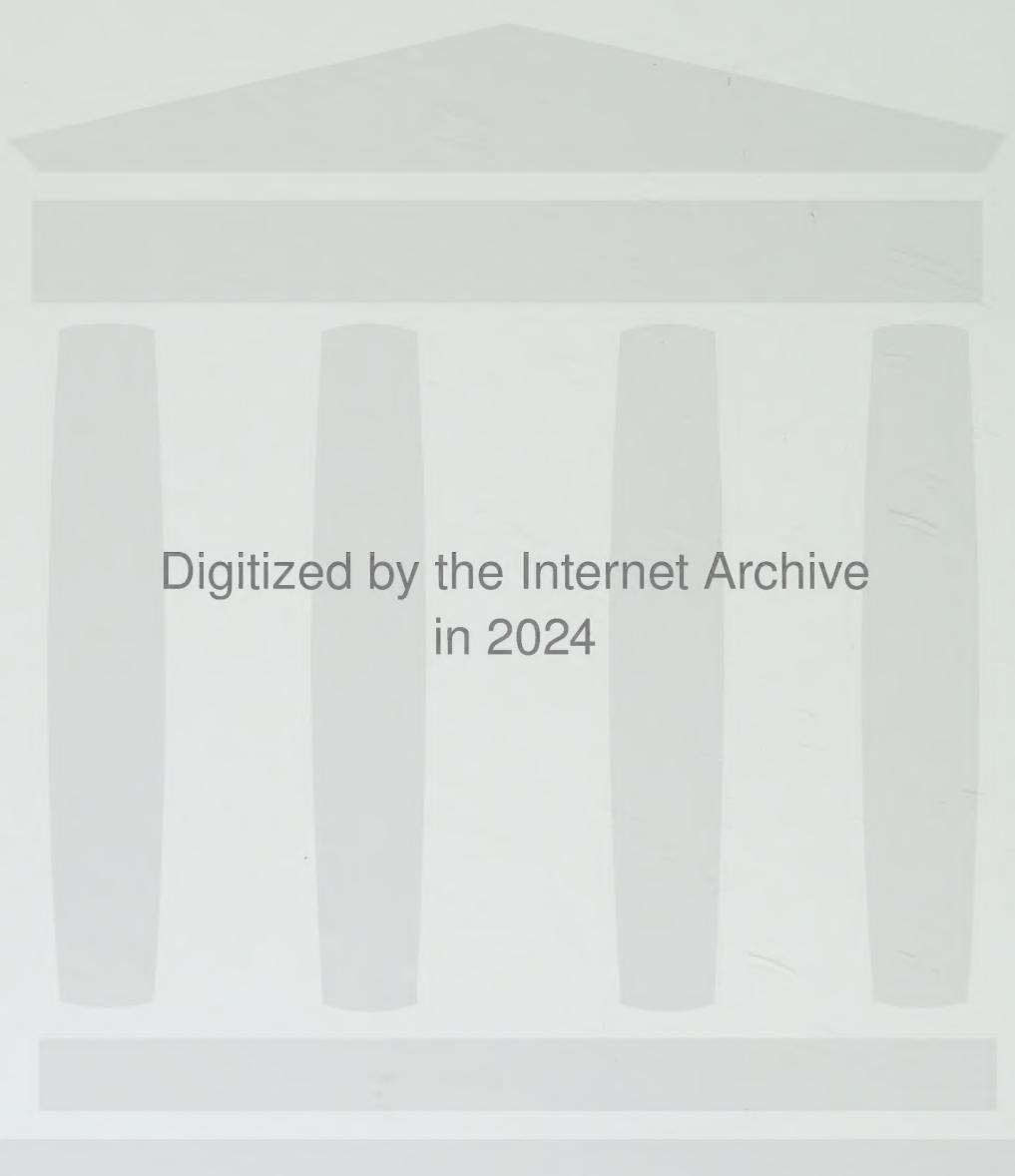
A colorful illustration of a young person with dark hair tied back, wearing a bright red coat over a white collared shirt. They are smiling and waving their right hand towards the viewer. The background is a lush green forest with sunlight filtering through the trees.

Little Red Ronnika

Retold by Bobby L. Jackson
Illustrations by Rhonda Mitchell



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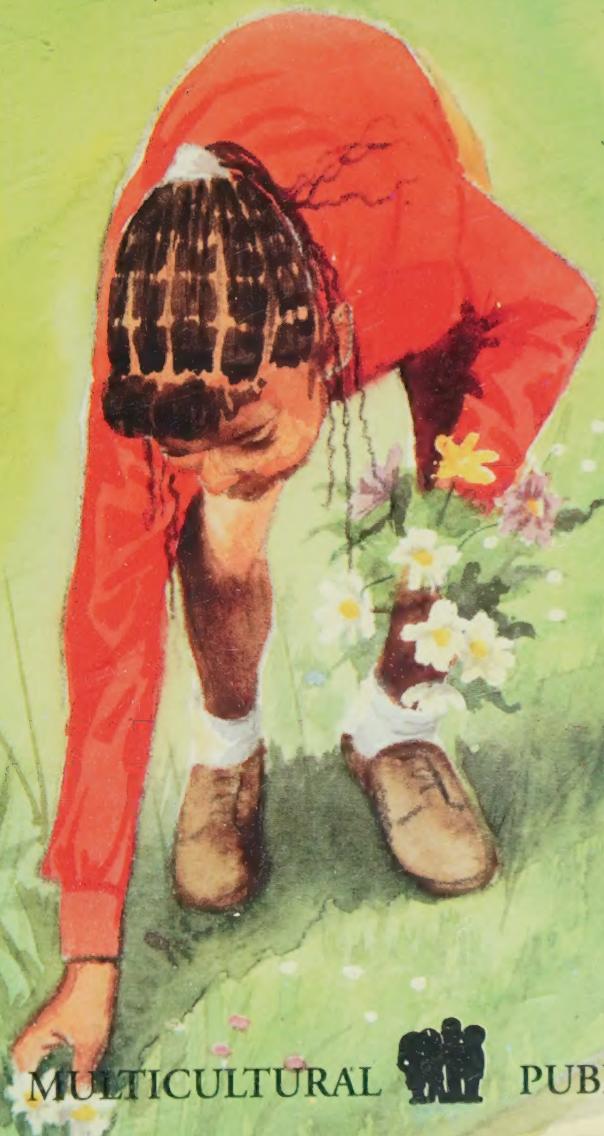
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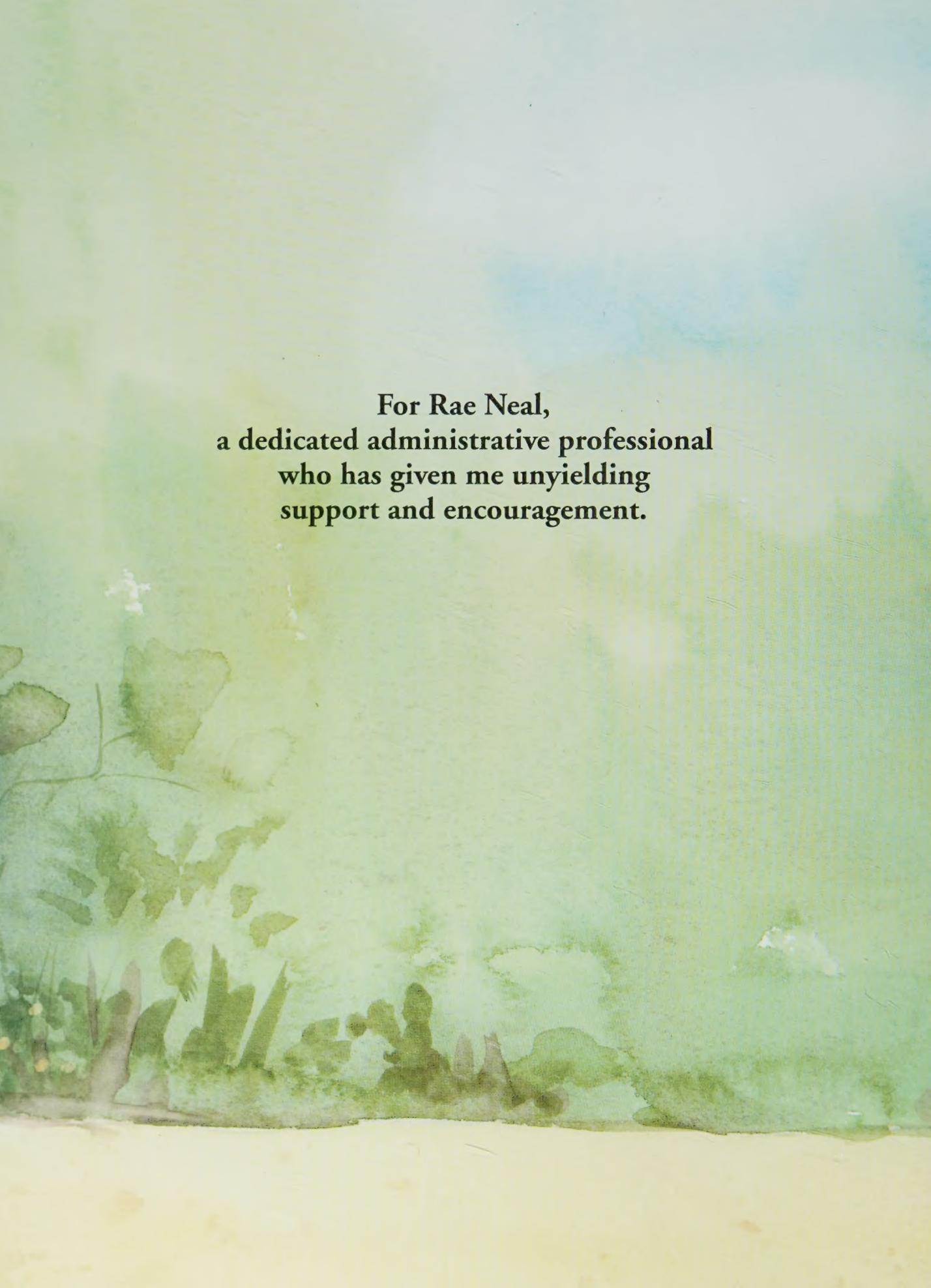
Bobby L. Jackson



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A soft-focus watercolor illustration of a garden. In the foreground, there's a path with some low-lying plants and a small, dark silhouette of a person walking away. The middle ground shows more foliage and flowers, with a cluster of white flowers on the left. The background is a wash of light green and blue.

**For Rae Neal,
a dedicated administrative professional
who has given me unyielding
support and encouragement.**

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Illustrations Copyright © 1998 by Rhonda Mitchell

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their continued support and encouragement.

There once lived a young sister near the edge of a woods in the city of Little Akron. Her name was Ronnika. The people in Little Akron called her Little Red Ronnika because they always saw her cruising through the neighborhood with her grandmother in their candy-apple-red Lamborghini. Granny's ride had a white drop top, was lightning fast and had computer gadgets inside. And, Granny could really wheel that Lamborghini, although she was more than 70 years old. Both Granny and Little Red Ronnika smiled when they cruised through Little Akron.









At 13, Little Red Ronnika was honest and lovable. And Granny was a wise old woman who had lots of class. She always shared stories about life and about being careful. Most of all, she taught and encouraged Little Red Ronnika to get a good education and warned her about talking to strangers.

One foggy Saturday morning, during the time of the season when the leaves on the trees began turning colors, Granny had a touch of the flu and decided to stay in bed. Little Red Ronnika and her mother boiled chicken, noodles and vegetables to make Granny some homemade soup.





Before Little Red Ronnika headed down the path to Granny's house with the soup, mother cautioned her about safety.

"Remember, go straight to Mama's house without talking to strangers or fooling around."

"O.K. Ma. Check you later."

And off she skipped to
Granny's house.





Not long after that, along came Barry “Slick” Wolfe, a pesky but charming parasite. Barry was nicknamed “Slick” by the city elders because he roamed around Little Akron conning the townsfolk-then making meals out of them. He lived in a suburb near Sharin’ Woods, which was right next to Little Akron. Slick’s silver and white fur made him look different and more handsome than other wolves. His cunning use of singing and

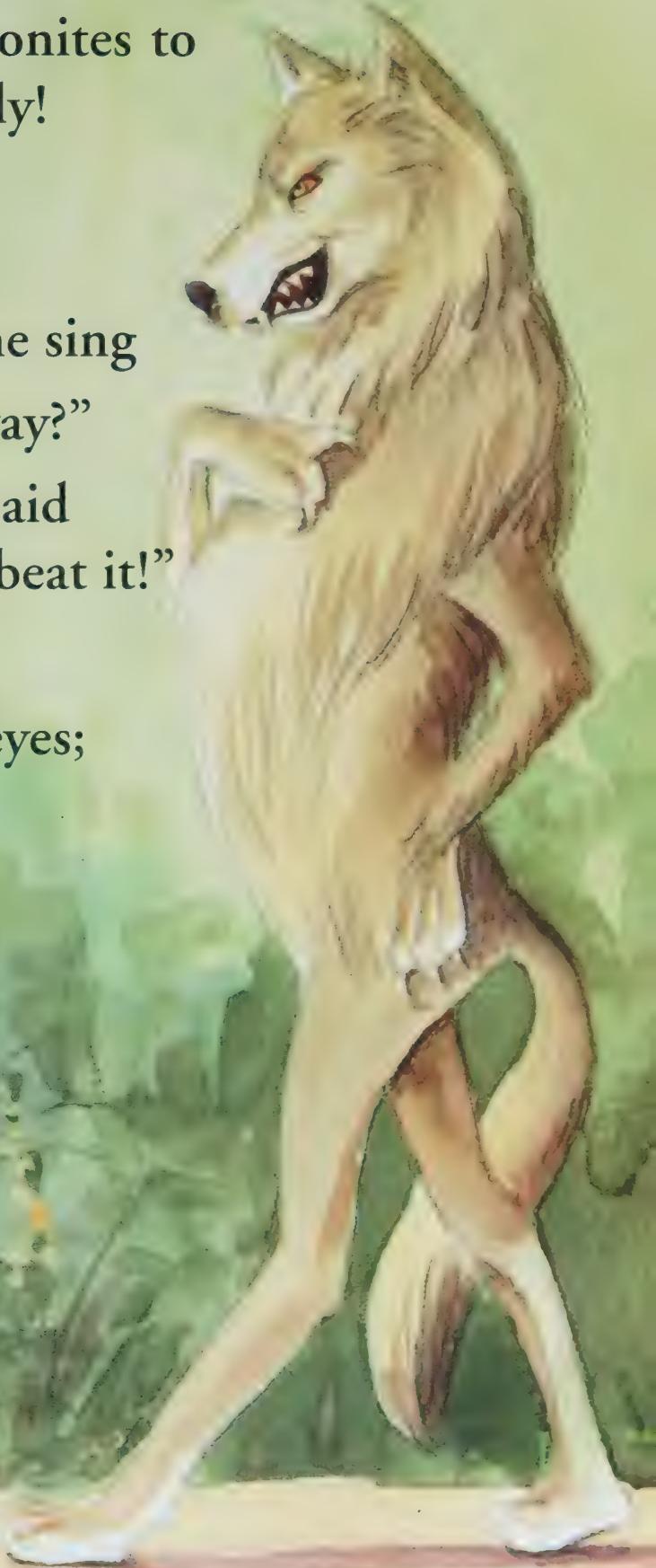


poetry often led many Akronites to
their fateful destiny-his belly!

“Hello cutie pie;
isn’t it a lovely day?
Would you like to hear me sing
as you walk along your way?”
“Nope. Ma and Granny said
not to talk to strangers, so beat it!”

Slick continued...

“There is magic in your eyes;
you’re a pretty little girl.





What a wonderful surprise.

“Where are you going precious pearl?”

Slick’s voice sounded so mellow and innocent that Little Red Ronnika started rapping back...

“I’m headed to my grandma’s
near the end of these old woods.
She is ill with flu and coughing.

I’m taking chicken soup and goods.”

Slick rapped on...



J“f you love your grandma much,
you should take her ferns and flowers.

Pick them with a careful touch.

For, she's in her weakest hours.”

All the while, Slick slobbered and licked his chops, knowing that he would not miss a good-looking meal on this day.





“Let me show you where the best-smelling ferns and flowers are,” suggested Barry “Slick” Wolfe.

And, he did. As Little Red Ronnika picked a bouquet of ferns and flowers, not realizing what she was doing, she told Slick exactly where Granny’s house was.

“A little blue house at the end of the trail... down that path,” she pointed.

There was a soft knock on Granny's front door. "Who's there?" Granny called out in a weak voice.

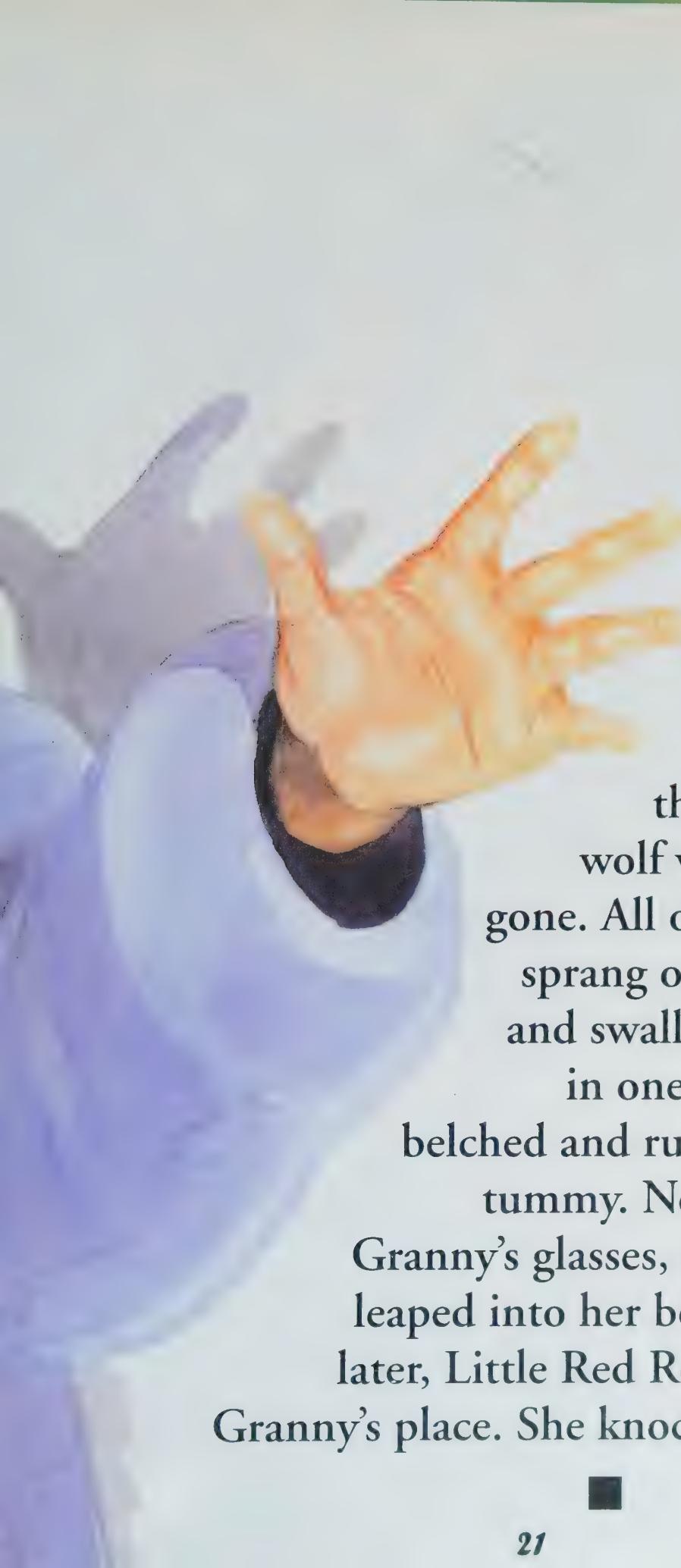
"It's me Grandma," howled Slick in a squeaky tone. She peeked through her peephole and saw the witty wolf at the door. She was not about to be out-foxed by a wolf. "He'll make a nice fur coat," she whispered to herself. "I'll be the first grandmother in Little Akron to sport a silver wolf coat."

First, Granny smartly dragged herself into the kitchen and grabbed a deep iron skillet. Then, she stood behind the front door, carefully unlocked it and called out for the sneaky wolf to enter. "Come in Granddaughter. The door is unlocked." As soon as the wolf came through the front door, Granny wacked him over the head with the skillet.









She quickly limped to the linen closet to get some sewing tools. But when she returned to the spot where the wolf was lying, he was gone. All of a sudden, Slick sprang out from nowhere and swallowed up Granny in one whole piece. He belched and rubbed his bulging tummy. Next, he picked up Granny's glasses, put them on and leaped into her bed. A short while later, Little Red Ronnika arrived at Granny's place. She knocked on the door.











“Come in Granddaughter,” mimicked Slick in his best granny-sounding voice.

“Here’s some soup and stuff that Ma and me made to help you feel better.”

“Thank you my dear. Put them on the kitchen table and come here and give your Granny a big hug,” barked the wolf impatiently.

As Little Red Ronnika came closer, she noticed something strange.



“**G**ranny, you must be sick.

Your eyes have gotten so large,” she said.

“The better to see you more clearly, my dear.”

“And Granny, your teeth have gotten
so long and sharp!”

“The better to chow down on you with,
my dear.” And with that, the wolf jumped
out of Granny’s bed and swallowed up
Little Red Ronnika in one gulp.

Then, he rubbed his tummy
and laid down on Granny’s bed.







Jt just so happened that Granny's neighbor, a tree trimmer, came walking by as the wolf snored. Knowing that this noise was too loud to be Granny's, he became suspicious and decided to check on her. When he looked into her bedroom window, he saw the fat-bellied wolf asleep in Granny's bed. He wasn't sure, but he thought he could hear faint cries of help coming from the wolf's belly.





As the tree trimmer walked into the room the wolf woke up, jumped from the bed and ran toward the door. The tree trimmer was too strong to take on. With just one swing of the tree trimmer's ax, the wolf's head fell to the floor. Out popped Granny and Little Red Ronnika. They were alive and well.



Granny was so thankful to her neighbor that she cooked dinner. Since she was not one to waste good meat, she made wolf steak with part of the wolf. Later that week, she made wolf stew, wolf roast and wolf chops. They enjoyed a great feast all that week.



And, Granny sported that silver wolf coat two weeks later. When Granny got over the flu, she took the tree trimmer and Little Red Ronnika for a spin in the Lamborghini.



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